

THE TOWN OF FOREST HEIGHTS  
RESOLUTION 07-21

**A RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE THE CONDUCT OF A  
MODERATED DEBATE FOR THE PURPOSE OF ALLOWING A MEANINGFUL  
EXCHANGE OF POSITIONS AND COMMENTS ON ISSUES FACING THIS YEAR'S  
SLATE OF CANDIDATES RUNNING IN THE TOWN OF FOREST HEIGHTS 2021  
GENERAL ELECTION**

Introduced By: Councilman Barnes

**WHEREAS**, the Town Board of Elections is conducting a General Election for the Town with the polls opening on March 10, 2021 ("Election Day") from 11 A.M. until 8:00 P.M. for in-person, and absentee voting (by mail or drop box) on and before election day or for longer hours as determined by the Town Board, provided that the room capacity and social distancing requirements as prescribed are followed; and;

**WHEREAS**, in the past, candidate debates for municipal elections have been hosted in-person in the Community Room of the Municipal Building; and

**WHEREAS**, the Mayor has ordered that during the existence of the local and/or State emergency the Town offices and Municipal Building will continue to be closed to the public for assemblies and some of the staff will telework with the following exceptions: (i) police operations and use of spaces to support those operations, (ii) to allow conduct of a municipal election and operation of a polling place, (iii) to allow entry by individual members of the public to conduct town business and meet with staff consistent with the social distancing and masking requirements as stated herein and (iv) to allow the conduct of organized municipal health maintenance or exercise classes approved by the Mayor or Council including a senior exercise class to be held in the Community Room of the Municipal Building every Tuesday and Thursday (4:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.).

**WHEREAS**, despite the limited access by the public to Town facilities during the pandemic, the Mayor and Council have continued to conduct public meetings including public forums virtually using Zoom and telephonically; and

**WHEREAS**, the Council finds that it would be in the best interest of the Town to conduct or facilitate another candidate's debate (virtually) prior to the 2021 General Election for those candidates (opposed or not) wishing to participate and share their views provided such participation observes proper decorum and comports with the rules of the neutral moderator.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, by the Mayor and the Town Council of the Town of Forest Heights, supports and condones using Town resources, technical assistance, and computers to host a voluntary, candidate's debate via Zoom or another virtual platform prior to the 2021 General Election.

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**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Mayor and her designees are further authorized by the Council to confirm and coordinate the selection or recruitment of a neutral, nonpartisan moderator or emcee, who is not a Town official or employee, and support said moderator to host a debate forum prior to March 9, 2021 using Zoom or another virtual meeting platform at a date and time convenient to the Townspeople for their participation.

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Mayor and staff shall cause to be posted in the Town Hall, on the Town's website and on the Town's Facebook social media site appropriate announcements and information so that the public may have notice to observe the debates.

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the debates shall not be considered a Town public meeting pursuant to the Md. Open Meetings Act but shall be hosted by said neutral moderator who along with any other volunteers shall be responsible for carrying out the debate with limited support from Town staff.

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this Resolution shall take effect immediately upon passage.

PASSED this 1 day of March 2021.

**APPROVED:** By Resolution of the Town Council of The Town of Forest Heights, Maryland

ROLL CALL VOTE

YEA/NAY/ABSTAIN/ABSENT

MUHAMMAD

NO

KENNEDY II

NO

NOBLE

NO

BARNES

NO

HINES

NO

WASHINGTON

YES

ATKINSON

YES

ATTEST:

THE TOWN OF FOREST HEIGHTS,  
MARYLAND

**SIGNATURE ON FILE**

**SIGNATURE ON FILE**

Sherletta Hawkins, Town Clerk

By:

Mayor Habeeb-Ullah Muhammad, Mayor

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By: **SIGNATURE ON FILE**  
Calvin Washington, Council President

CERTIFICATION

I, hereby certify, as the duly appointed Town Clerk of the Town of Forest Heights, Maryland, that on the 1 day of March 2021 with 4<sup>54</sup> Aye votes and 0<sup>54</sup> Nay votes the aforesaid Resolution 07-21 passed.

**SIGNATURE ON FILE**

Sherletta Hawkins, Town Clerk